

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5, 7-11, 13-15, 18, 21, 22, 24-26, 28, 29, and 31 are pending in the application. Claims 21, 25, and 29 have been amended hereby. Claims 1, 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, and 29 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that Claim 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitation of the base claim and any intervening claims, as stated in the Office Action in paragraph 19.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of Claims 21, 22, 24-26, 28, 29, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §102, as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,760,917 (“Sheridan”); of the rejection of Claims 1, 5, 9-11, 14, 15, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being obvious over Sheridan; and of the rejection of Claims 7 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being obvious over Sheridan in view of “Official Notice.”

In the Office Action in paragraph 6, the presently claimed invention as recited in Claim 21 is compared to the disclosure of Sheridan, and the Office Action alleges that “a server/method/terminal distribute information, comprising: a communication unit configured to receive a request including access destination information from a first terminal,” as recited in Claim 21, corresponds to Fig. 6, 40A of Sheridan to conclude that “the first terminal is the user who owns the photos and arranges various sharing groups as listed in Fig. 2.”

However, descriptions at col. 13 et seq. of Sheridan merely indicate that a terminal 40A sends IDs for respective requests for developing films to Hub station 20 (Hub B).

Further, the Office Action contends that the limitation “a processor configured to control the communication unit . . .,” as recited in Claim 21, corresponds to the to Hub station 20 in Fig.

6 of sheridan. However, Sheridan fails to teach or suggest that the Hub station 20 controls “the communication unit to access to a content server and obtain the information by using the access destination information upon receiving of the request and to control the communication unit to distribute the information obtained from the content server to the plurality of second terminals without receiving a request to receive the information from any of the plurality of second terminals,” as recited in amended independent Claim 21.

Furthermore, there is a basic difference between the presently claimed invention and Sheridan regarding the sharing of information, the format of the former being of a push type, in which terminals receive information without any request for the information, while the format of the latter being of a pull type, in which only a terminal requesting will receive information.

Claim 1 recites “a second transmitting portion transmitting said bill of charges received by said third receiving portion either to the one terminal device having transmitted the distribution request or to a telecommunications carrier to which the one terminal device subscribes,” that is, a terminal requesting the sending of shared information owes a bill of charges for distribution of information, however not a terminal receiving the information.

The Office Action concedes that Sheridan fails to teach or suggest:

“the second transmitting portion transmitting said bill of charges received by said third receiving portion either to the one terminal device having transmitted the distribution request or to a telecommunications carrier to which the one terminal device subscribes.

However, charging media content or related distribution services is well known in the art. In Sheridan’s two Hubs scenario, Hub A is connected to the scanner where the original file is submitted. Thus Hub A contains information may include the film’s low resolution image sets and user identification. On the other hand, the user who makes the request and the other terminals of the granted group may also be connected to a different Hub. As such, it would have been

obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to keep the billing information at the content server, with charges sent to the Hub to which the requesting terminal (or the ISP the requesting terminal) is connected because by doing so services do not have to be bounded to the Hub where the film is connected.” (citations omitted)

However, it is respectfully submitted that Sheridan discloses that respective users bring films to a scanner station for ordering and receiving developed prints of the films. Accordingly, it is natural to perform the payment for the development of the films to the scanner station at the time of bringing films to the scanner station. It is respectfully submitted that Sheridan teaches away from the content server A holding a bill of charges which should be sent to the Hub to which a terminal which sent a request for distribution of information belongs.

Therefore, Claims 1 and 21 are patentably distinct over the cited references, alone or in any possible combination.

Independent Claims 11, 15, 18, 25 and 29 recite features similar in many respects to the features discussed above with respect to Claims 1 and 21 and, for at least the same reasons, are submitted to be patentably distinct over the cited references, alone or in any possible combination.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, and 29, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentably distinct over the cited references, alone or in any possible combination.

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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